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Report Highlights:

Japan is becoming even more eco-friendly as efficiencies are generated through new technology. Stories about carbon dioxide footprinting, e-car battery, the battle of the yogurts, and calorie-free products are in this issue of Japan Food Trends (JFT).

JFT communicates Japanese food and lifestyle trends that we hope will help U.S. exporters to develop products and generate marketing ideas.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Editor's Notes

ATO enjoyed a visit from Dr. Richard Reich (Assistant Commissioner), Peter Thornton (Assistant Dir. Int'l Marketing) and Scott Bissette (Int'l Marketing Specialist) of NC Dept. of Ag. and Consumer Services, who to our delight read beforehand and brought along the June issue of Japan Food Trends.

Perhaps we are getting closer to the lifestyle of Star Trek than we realize. There is no need to carry cash these days in Japan and perhaps not even a photo ID. Cards or mobile phones take care of it all in Japan. With these cards you can purchase just about anything including all kinds of yogurts that might help your digestive system, improve your complexion and more. But that's not all. Soon to come to supermarkets will be e-battery charging stations for your electric automobiles and snow stored vegetables. However, what may become more and more difficult is to purchase calories.

Think Eco (Ecology)

Sapporo Beer to introduce 'carbon footprinting' labels The Daily Yomiuri, June 20, 2008 p8

Major beer manufacturer Sapporo Beer will introduce a label for one of its products in 2009. The label will state the amount of carbon dioxide emitted during the entire production and disposal process. The calculation of CO₂ emission is known as 'carbon footprinting' and is a practice that will hopefully lead companies to reduce CO₂ emission.

According to Yomiuri, "(o)bservers said if such efforts take off it would give consumers alternative criterion for choosing products in addition to taste and price, such as taking into account climate change."



Aeon in talks on e-car battery chargers at malls The Daily Yomiuri, June 22, 2008 p6



The largest supermarket operator in Japan, Aeon, is considering installing electric car battery chargers at its malls. Affected by high gasoline prices and a keener conscious of environmental issues, automakers are planning to develop more e-cars. Supermarkets such as Aeon will alleviate e-car owners' fear of electricity shortage (presently, e-cars run only 200 kilometers per charge) if e-battery chargers are set up throughout the country.

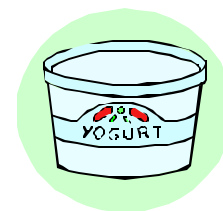
Aeon to sell vegetables kept cold in snow The Daily Yomiuri, June 19, 2008 p9

You probably know that low temperatures activate the conversion of starch in vegetables into sugar. Snow provides this low temperature environment to increase sweetness in vegetables. Aeon will store in their specially designed warehouse vegetables in snow at a low temperature of 2 degrees Celsius.

Health

New Product Battle: Yogurt Nihon Keizai Shimbun, June 26, 2008, p35

Although the total sales of yogurts are stable, those that offer health benefits continue to increase market share. Yogurts that help balance intestinal functions are marketed to women. Probia Yogurt: LG21 Aloe targets women by promoting beautiful skin.



Three criteria, deliciousness, occasion, and price/appeal were used to compare products. Deliciousness includes components such as taste, smell and texture. Occasion includes breakfast, office snack and midnight snack. In regards to price/appeal, 90 grams per cup is the most suitable for women and health benefits attract consumers.

For your reference, 2005 total sales for the leading yogurt, Labre, were US\$3.8 million*. The predicted sales for 2008 are US\$114 million*.

*Exchange rate Yen 105/US\$

Consumers have appetite for calorie-free products The Daily Yomiuri, June 30, 2008, p8

Shelf-space of calorie-free products seems to continue to grow. Calorie-free canned coffee, beer, carbonated drinks, and sports drinks, and yogurts are a few examples that tout calorie-free on their label.

However, the labeling law for calorie-free is fuzzy. For some products, a zero calorie label is acceptable by the government even though the calorie level isn't strictly zero. This is because the "standard for a drink is less than five kilocalories per 100 milliliters (100 grams).

Two issues come to mind. One, fuzzy labeling is tolerated right now because the Japanese government is fighting metabolic syndrome. Two, what's the point of this labeling if everybody does it? How much of an impact will there be on consumers when they become inundated with calorie-free labeled products?